

MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, October 1, 2021, 10:00 AM
Ft Johnson/Virtual – Hybrid Meeting

MAC Members Present: D. Swygert, B. Rose, P. Keener

Virtual: C. Woods, J. Massey, R. Dukes, P. Brown

MAC Members Absent:

DNR Staff: Maier, Bobertz, Boyles, Darden. Snoots, Binz, McDonough, Weeks, Keppler, Ballenger, Levesque, Sanger, PKS, Hackathorne, Martore, Tweel, Smart, Watson, Ingle

Guests: Chaplain Jeff Shealy (virtual)

1. Call Meeting to Order – Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert called the meeting to order at 10:00.

2. Housekeeping- Julie Binz:

Julie reviewed the processes for those attending via Virtual Meeting.

3. Invocation- Pastor Jeff Shealy:

Pastor Shealy led the Invocation for the meeting.

4. Pledge of Allegiance- Vice Chairman Rose:

B. Rose led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Introduction of Guests/Public Comments: Julie Binz: N/A

6. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes (June 2021) B. Rose made a motion to approve the minutes, P. Keener 2nd, motion carried unanimously.

P. Keener requested that highlights of discussions over topics be included in minutes. (Please note that all meetings are recorded, and any Committee member can request a link to the meeting up to six months after the actual meeting. After that, downloads can be requested.

7. Reports:

A. Flounder, Next Steps: Tanya Darden, Erin Levesque, Aaron Watson

The trio briefed the Committee on MRD's development of the Flounder Stocking Enhancement Program funded by the Legislative action passed earlier this year. T. Darden noted that we will be using a responsible approach including an understanding of the wild flounder population, producing

animals in a hatchery and a small-scale experimental release. Southern Flounder present many unique challenges and opportunities and releasing the fish into SC estuaries is years away.

Collection techniques have been developed and genetic analysis has begun for sequencing of DNA. Renovations at Waddell and here at MRRRI of infrastructure have already begun.

The Committee was presented a handout outlining the 8-year timeline of the program.

P. Keener asked if we have partners involved with the program and Dr. Darden noted that we collaborate with other stocking and mariculture entities around the country. Ms. Keener also commented that there is a similar situation of pressure on the Blue Crab fishery and asked about enacting some of these same efforts with them. P. Maier noted that there is a renewed interest in this to become more proactive.

C. Woods asked how we are dealing with out of state pressure on the fishery and if we could prohibit gear types or some other action. P. Maier said that Legislative Action is the only way we can address this. DNR does not have the authority to take those actions.

B. Public Trust Doctrine: Shannon Bobertz

SCDNR Legal Counsel S. Bobertz reviewed the Public Trust Doctrine in South Carolina with a handout given to the Committee.

The Doctrine is in the SC Constitution Section 4 of Article XIV. She reviewed the history of Public Trust and how it protects navigable waters for the citizens of this state. The State Legislature is the Trustee of the Doctrine and they have delegated their authority to DHEC through the Coastal Zone Management Act to allow private use of a public resource. There can be private ownership on public lands, but the public can still use the navigable waters.

Chairman Swygert asked about public crab pots being placed next to private docks and Ms. Bobertz said it is a protected right by law to the citizens of the State.

C. Coastwide Environmental Data Uses: Andrew Tweel

A. Tweel gave an in-depth overview of the SCECAP program at MRD. Some of the highlights of the program include:

- Long-term monitoring project
- State and Federal Partners

- Monitors the quality of all SC estuaries
- Used for Management decisions
- Began in 1999- Present
- Coastal wide monitoring
- Sample 30 sites per year
- Occurs in July and August

The program covers water sampling, sediment sampling and trawl sampling. They score the habitat of both water and sediment. Overall, the scores for all years are good over time.

They additionally provide data on weakfish, spot and croaker to OFM that is used in management decisions. The program contributes to many areas of research and management withing many different entities and partners.

P. Keener asked if we share the data with DHEC and Andrew confirmed that it is and compiled with their data. Discussion clarifying responsibilities between DHEC and DNR on water quality management in relation to shellfish beds ensued. She enquired if sampling is done on microplastics, and Andrew confirmed it has begun but not analyzed yet. It should be noted that the Shellfish Research Section is doing some sampling in relation to oyster bed habitat.

8. Deputy Director Comments – Phil Maier:

D.D. Maier's comments included:

- Former OFM Director David Cupka received the Order of the Palmetto
- Long time MRD employees Wally Jenkins and Mike Denson recently retired, and their wealth of knowledge will be sorely missed
- Renovations @ Waddell will be being for the new Flounder Stocking Program made possible by the license fee increases passed by the General Assembly
- The Governor's Cup Billfishing Series concluded with a very successful tournament season
- CCEHBR Lease has ended, and the Marine Division will be using some of that facility going forward
- DD Maier thanked everyone for the support of him and his family during his recent health challenges

9. Date, Place & Time of Next Meeting – Vice Chairman Rose:

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is Friday, January 7th 10:00 at the Waddell Mariculture Center. Virtual attendance is an option.

10. Adjourn – Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert adjourned the meeting at 11:35.